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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the period under review, the Palestinian Authority continued to implement its two-year programme of strengthening the State institutions of a future Palestinian State. The United Nations enhanced its support to those efforts and responded to humanitarian needs. In the key areas of United Nations engagement, the functions of the Palestinian Authority are sufficient for a functioning State government. However, those achievements remain constrained by the continued occupation by Israel and a political divide with Gaza.

The overall socio-economic and political situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained challenging, despite economic growth registered across the Territory, which was prompted by Palestinian and Israeli efforts. The Israeli-Palestinian direct talks, despite a brief resumption in September 2010, remained suspended during most of the reporting period. Calls for legislative and presidential elections, which had been postponed in 2010, also remained uncertain due to a continued political split between the West Bank and Gaza, although municipal elections have been set for July 2011. Unemployment and food insecurity remained high, particularly in Gaza, despite economic growth there resulting in part from the easing of the closure and from approval of a number of United Nations reconstruction projects. Key elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remained unfulfilled.

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The present report describes efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 65/134, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it, at its sixty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and of the needs still unmet, and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from May 2010 to April 2011.

2. Information on the living and socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular: (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/65/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several documents. The Consolidated Appeals Process for 2011 sought $575 million to address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable and where the Palestinian Authority outreach is limited, namely the Gaza Strip, Area C, including the seam zones, and East Jerusalem. The medium-term response plan for 2009-2010 outlined the United Nations contribution to the national development and State-building efforts of Palestinians as defined in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy, which was estimated at $675 million for 2010-2011, excluding emergency relief interventions. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 outlined priority development needs worth $4.161 billion. The Palestinian Authority programme of the 13th government, entitled "Palestine: ending the occupation, establishing the State", outlined the government's two-year State-building strategy, which was updated on 30 August 2010 by a document entitled "Homestretch to freedom: the second year of the 13th government programme", which outlined the remaining steps to build a viable State by August 2011.

4. During the reporting period, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority continued its efforts to support the peace process and to ensure effective coordination among the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

5. The present report provides an overview of the work of the United Nations to assist the Palestinian people and institutions, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/134. Also included is a summary of key political developments and challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community works to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the

State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority and negotiations between the parties.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

6. Israeli-Palestinian proximity talks, mediated by the United States of America from May to August 2010, paved the way for the resumption of direct negotiations on 2 September. However, the negotiations were suspended on 26 September, when the partial 10-month Israeli restraint on settlement construction in the West Bank expired. Both the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, agreed during their meetings in September to seek a solution based on two States for two peoples, that the negotiations could be completed within one year, and that their aim was to resolve borders, security, refugees, Jerusalem and all other core issues.

7. The Quartet continued its efforts to help the parties find a way back to direct negotiations. As agreed by the Quartet principals in Munich on 5 February, Quartet envoys met separately with Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, and have been giving serious consideration to the views of the parties on how to bring about resumed negotiations on all core issues, including borders and security. The Quartet reaffirmed that negotiations should lead to an outcome that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all permanent status issues, in order to end the conflict and achieve a two-State solution. The Quartet reiterated its support for concluding those negotiations by September 2011. The Secretary-General continued to support efforts to help the parties resolve the conflict and achieve the two-State solution.

8. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority has made serious gains in the pursuit of a State-building agenda in the Territory under the Authority's control. On 30 August, the Authority issued a programme document entitled "Homestretch to freedom: the second year of the 13th government programme", which sets further goals and means of strengthening State institutions for a future State by August 2011. In September 2010, the Quartet and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee took note of the assessment of the World Bank of 16 September 2010 that the performance of the Palestinian Authority in institution-building and delivery of public services made the Authority well positioned for the establishment of a State.

9. During the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting on 13 April, the United Nations made clear its assessment that in the six areas, namely health, education, governance, social protection, food security and livelihoods and infrastructure, where it is mostly engaged with the Palestinian Authority, the functions of the Authority were sufficient for a viable State government. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also reported strong progress in institution-building at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, the Chair of which concluded that the Palestinian Authority was above the threshold for a functioning State in the key sectors studied. However, those admirable achievements remained constrained by the continued Israeli occupation and a political divide between the West Bank and Gaza, and thus did not apply yet to East Jerusalem, much of Area C and Gaza.

10. The internal Palestinian divide continued during the reporting period, inhibiting the ability of the Palestinian Authority to extend its State-building work to Gaza. That underscored the need for progress towards Palestinian unity within the framework of the Palestinian Authority and the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In March, in response to popular protests in Gaza and Ramallah, the PLO leadership and Hamas in Gaza announced their intentions to seek reconciliation. President Abbas said that he intended to visit the Gaza Strip to discuss unity with Hamas officials. Both sides engaged in consultations with the Egyptian authorities and other regional Governments to advance unity. On 27 April, Fatah and Hamas initialled a preliminary understanding for a reconciliation agreement. On 8 February, the Palestinian Authority had called for local elections to be held on 9 July. On 17 February, President Abbas declared that presidential and legislative elections should also be held as soon as possible in the West Bank and in Gaza.

11. In Gaza, key elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remained unfulfilled. Hamas remained in de facto control of the Gaza Strip. Israel continued to maintain closure of the Strip. On 20 June, following the flotilla incident of 31 May, the Government of Israel announced measures aimed at "liberalizing the system by which civilian goods enter Gaza". On 8 December, the Government of Israel decided to further "liberalize" exports from Gaza. The flow of construction materials, particularly aggregate, iron bar and cement, entering Gaza through tunnels between Gaza and Egypt continued to be significantly higher than the amount entering through Israeli-controlled crossings. Concerns remained about the smuggling of weapons into Gaza.

12. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip remained a priority for the United Nations. The Secretary-General continued to urge the Government of Israel to further relax the closure, and for further measures to promote full economic recovery and reconstruction of Gaza. The Government of Israel approved more than $150 million of United Nations projects involving "dual-use" materials during the reporting period. There has been some reconstruction of the destroyed civilian infrastructure and damage caused by Israel's military operation "Cast Lead".

13. A fragile and uneasy de facto calm was broadly maintained between Gaza and Israel, but indiscriminate firing of rockets, mortars and other munitions on Israel by Hamas and other militant groups increased dramatically in 2011, amid another round of worrying escalation. The frequency of Israeli operations in Gaza also vastly increased during the reporting period, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. The United Nations supported efforts to de-escalate tensions, but the underlying causes of instability remained unaddressed.

14. Notwithstanding continued performance of the Palestinian security forces and an overall improved security climate marked by the lowest presence of Israeli troops since 2005, violent acts by settlers against the Palestinian population and violence against the settler population continued during the reporting period. The first quarter of 2011 witnessed an increase in violent incidents and a rise in tensions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In East Jerusalem, that was due in part to settlement activity, house demolitions and evictions, expulsion of East Jerusalem Palestinian residents and other provocative actions. There was also a de facto settlement restraint in East Jerusalem for a part of the reporting period and the Israeli authorities made efforts to ease access to Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif for

prayers during the month of Ramadan. On 23 March, a bomb exploded at a bus terminal in the centre of Jerusalem, killing one and injuring some 30 civilians.

B. Humanitarian and socio-economic context

Economic and fiscal developments

15. Real growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 9.3 per cent for 2010, consisting of 7.6 per cent in the West Bank and 15.1 per cent in Gaza. While the gradual easing of movement restrictions contributed to economic growth in the West Bank, the main drivers were public expenditure by the Palestinian Authority and donor support,[1] and also higher private sector confidence and reforms by the Authority. Growth in Gaza was in part attributed to the relaxation of the closure by Israel. Consumer price inflation fell from 4 per cent at the end of 2009 to 2.9 per cent in 2010. Unemployment rates fell slightly in 2010, compared with 2009, from 17.8 to 17.2 per cent in the West Bank, and from 38.6 to 37.8 per cent in Gaza. Concerns about the long-term prospects of the Palestinian economy continued to include the need for recovery of the private sector, reduction of dependency on foreign aid and public expenditure, diversification of the economy, access to natural resources and removal of access restrictions.

16. The government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad continued to implement key economic and fiscal reforms. The Palestine Authority estimated that the annual deficit would fall to $1 billion in 2011, reflecting a 16 per cent decrease from 2010 and a steady decline over the past three years. Efforts to improve the collection of utility bills and other revenues have been strengthened. Value added in services accounted for 17.2 per cent of West Bank GDP in 2010, followed by mining, manufacturing, electricity and water (14.1 per cent) and wholesale and retail trade (11.9 per cent). On 4 February, Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed with Quartet representative, Tony Blair, on a package of measures to help improve Palestinian livelihoods and support economic growth in the West Bank and in Gaza. The package included enhancements in energy, water and exports for Gaza, and further support on telecommunications, schools and clinics in Area C in the West Bank.

17. Economic activity in Gaza was positively affected by the 20 June 2010 decision (see para. 11 above). Value added in services accounted for 32.7 per cent of Gaza's GDP in 2010, followed by public administration and defence (22.4 per cent) and construction (9.5 per cent). The estimated number of tunnels in operation at the end of the reporting period had fallen to roughly 300.[2]

Humanitarian and socio-economic developments

18. During the reporting period from 1 May 2010 to 12 April 2011 (see A/65/77-E/2010/56), 112 Palestinians were killed (99 in Gaza, 13 in the West Bank) and 1,270 injured (386 in Gaza, 884 in the West Bank) by Israeli security forces,

[1] See World Bank, "The underpinnings of the future Palestinian state: sustainable growth and institutions", Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (21 September, 2010).

[2] See United Nations, "*Easing the blockade: assessing the humanitarian impact on the population of the Gaza Strip*", Special Focus (March 2011), and A/65/77-E/2010/56, para. 18.

compared with 63 fatalities and 1,100 injuries during the previous period. In the West Bank, growing settler violence towards Palestinians resulted in three fatalities, 130 injuries and damage to property. During the reporting period, 11 Israelis were killed, including a family of five members on 11 March in the settlement of Itamar, and 91 injured, compared with 5 Israelis killed and 191 injured during the previous reporting period. Six people were killed and 66 injured as a result of intra-Palestinian conflict, compared with 47 killed and 62 injured in the previous reporting period. Militants launched 828 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel in the reporting period, compared with 91 in the previous period. Violations against children continued, as described in the report of the Secretary-General on Children in Armed Conflict (S/2011/250, paras. 120-129).

19. The level of food insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory decreased from 36 per cent in 2009 to 33 per cent in 2010, consisting of 52 per cent in Gaza and 22 per cent in the West Bank. Food insecurity levels were exacerbated in the West Bank by continued demolitions of housing and livelihood assets, which increased fourfold during the reporting period. Particularly in Area C, demolition of water harvesting cisterns and other livelihoods assets increased significantly, with more than 15 demolitions since the beginning of 2011. In the Gaza Strip, household vulnerability to food insecurity was also affected by lack of access to agricultural land in the buffer zone and limited access to fishing areas.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

20. The Israeli authorities continued to adopt measures to ease the movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. As of the drafting of the present report, there were approximately 500 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, 50 fewer than at the beginning of the reporting period. The positive impact of those measures, however, was offset in part by the number of ad hoc "flying" checkpoints, which averaged about 92 per week. During 2010, UNRWA faced continued restrictions in accessing refugee communities in the West Bank, with major implications on its ability to meet the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C maintained both occupied areas in a chronic state of arrested development, with deteriorating living conditions and increased vulnerability.

21. In Gaza, the additional restrictions on land and sea access put in place by the Israel Defense Forces in the wake of operation "Cast Lead" remained in place. The land along the border with Israel remained a "no-go" area for Gazans, with Israel citing security concerns in denying almost all access within 1,000 to 1,500 metres of the border. Thirty-five per cent of Gaza's agricultural land and 85 per cent of the maritime space continued to be inaccessible, affecting 178,000 people.

22. The volume of people travelling through the Erez crossing point, the only passage for movement of people between Gaza and the West Bank via Israel, rose slightly during the reporting period, from 106 per day in the first half of 2010 to 114 per day in the second half of 2010. Permits for Gaza businessmen rose sharply, from an average of 87 per month to 503 per month.

23. International and national non-governmental organizations in Gaza continued to face pressure from the de facto authorities. In some cases, national

non-governmental organizations were forced to close or came under direct control of Hamas authorities.

24. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2010 to March 2011, there were also 512 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations staff at Israeli checkpoints, resulting in a loss to the United Nations of approximately 344 working days. Many of those affected included teachers, medical doctors, nurses, social workers and field office staff, negatively affecting the delivery of education and health services and relief operations. The majority of the incidents occurred as United Nations staff crossed the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery. A unit within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, working on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator, continued to address the issues and support the operations of the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Barrier

25. During the reporting period, no new sections were added to the barrier, which was being constructed contrary to the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice in July 2004. As of February 2011, 62 per cent of the planned 709 km barrier remained completed. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, continued to perform its outreach activities and collect claims. More than 16,000 claims and more than 150,000 supporting documents were collected. Claim collection activities in Tubas and Jenin governorates were completed and the work was in advanced stages in Qalqilya and Tulkarem governorates as of the drafting of the present report. Other areas of continuing concern included limited access on the part of farmers to agricultural land behind the barrier and the situation of those communities in the "seam zone" that face restricted access to health and education services.

III. United Nations response

26. The United Nations system continued to pursue an integrated political, humanitarian, recovery and development strategy. It continued to promote a negotiated permanent status agreement for a two-State solution, a durable Israeli-Palestinian peace and the implementation of road map obligations by the parties. The United Nations continued planning and implementing extensive humanitarian programmes, in particular in Gaza, while strengthening its support to Palestinian State-building efforts.

A. Human and social development

27. The United Nations coordinated and delivered humanitarian assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the provision of food assistance to more than 1 million people, water and sanitation assistance to more than 1.5 million, and health and nutrition services to nearly 2.5 million. The United Nations also

continued to support the State-building agenda of the Palestinian Authority and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in the Territory.

Education

28. UNRWA provided free school education to more than 260,000 students in 325 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and the West Bank. Two thirds of the schools operated on a double-shift system, including 95 per cent of UNRWA schools in Gaza, where even that measure proved insufficient to accommodate the student population. During the reporting period, UNRWA created "rotating classes" in each of its schools in order to absorb student growth. To accommodate the growing student populations, UNRWA operated two schools from shipping containers, which were also placed in six other schools to provide emergency classroom space. There was chronic overcrowding and double, or sometimes triple, utilization of classrooms and, in many classrooms, three or four students sat at a desk designed for two.

29. The United Nations continued to provide extensive opportunities for vocational and non-formal education for Palestinians. UNRWA provided 1,840 youth from the West Bank with technical vocational training in three colleges in Ramallah. UNESCO continued the provision of learning opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized communities through a non-formal education support centre in Nablus. The support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education, under the child-friendly school initiative focused on remedial learning programmes to around 20,000 vulnerable children in 100 lowest performing schools, in order to help them improve their Arabic language and mathematics tests. In efforts to support reconstruction efforts, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNRWA jointly implemented a skills development programme primarily targeting the construction of refugee shelters in Gaza. ILO and UNRWA also worked to increase the skills and employability of older students in the construction sector.

30. ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promoted a culture of entrepreneurship and self-employment among young women and men. Under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority Ministries of Labour and Education, the "know about business" training package was rolled out to vocational and secondary schools. In view of its positive contribution, the project was being expanded to include all vocational and educational institutions.

31. UNESCO continued to provide technical assistance for the national teacher education strategy, particularly through support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession. UNICEF supported in-service teacher training to at least 2,500 teachers on interactive learning methods and the use of math and science kits. UNICEF support to the finalization of the national policy framework for early childhood development was coupled with early learning opportunities for at least 10,000 children through capacity-building of 450 parents, 320 caregivers and 30 kindergarten supervisors, and the provision of early childhood development kits to 50 kindergartens. UNICEF continued to support the school management information system to inform policy and programme interventions and enhance identification of gaps and vulnerabilities for urgent interventions.

32. The UNDP Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme continued to implement the Al Fakhoora scholarship programme for Gazan students. In 2010,

100 students were selected from Gaza's universities for a full scholarship in areas of youth and education.

33. All pupils in UNRWA Gaza schools received a small meal under the school feeding programme. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education partnered to improve health and nutrition at 161 schools, benefiting 67,000 students. The partnership also generated substantial income for women's groups and community-based organizations, which were contracted to provide food for the school canteens.

34. The UNICEF-led education cluster supported the advocacy efforts of the humanitarian country team for 26 schools in Area C that were in urgent need of rehabilitation and emergency education support. The specific needs of each school were assessed and the information shared with the international community and key stakeholders. UNICEF, UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education launched a back-to-school advocacy campaign in Area C. The event, widely covered by international, regional and local media, drew the attention of concerned partners and stakeholders to the right to education of all children.

Health

35. UNRWA continued to play a major role in the provision of health care, operating 42 health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank and 19 health points and five mobile clinics in the West Bank, in total employing more than 2,000 people. The number of consultations continued to increase, placing greater demands on the limited health services of UNRWA. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to provide technical and financial support to four women's health centres in Hebron and the Jabalia and Al Buraj refugee camps in Gaza. In the area of mental health, UNRWA held counselling sessions, while the World Health Organization (WHO) worked with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health to develop a strategic mental health plan.

36. The United Nations continued to focus on programming for infants and young children. Working jointly with Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health and the National Breastfeeding Committee, UNICEF supported the promotion of infant and young child feeding practices, through a breastfeeding campaign targeting around 7,500 mothers in Gaza. In addition, WHO supported the Ministry of Health in implementing the national strategy of infant and young child feeding practices. In support of the WHO strategy on integrated management of childhood illness, UNICEF supported the training of around 100 health-care providers and made available forms for recording sick children to health clinics.

37. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in maintaining high immunization coverage across the Occupied Palestinian Territory through the procurement of polio vaccines for the protection of 42,000 children, and procurement and logistics support for all other vaccines. UNICEF also provided urgent laboratory kits for laboratory micronutrient testing and printed maternal and child health handbooks for growth monitoring.

38. WHO worked with the Ministry of Health to compile information for an online health facilities database, including locations, types of services, specialized staff and equipment. WHO also worked with the Ministry to implement a jointly developed

strategic plan to prevent non-communicable diseases, and continued to support the Ministry in strengthening the nutrition surveillance system to monitor the situation of infants, pregnant women and schoolchildren.

39. As part of the programmes under the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United Nations, together with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the national AIDS committee, conducted training for 5,162 peer educators; 452 health personnel and community workers on HIV counselling and testing; 22 doctors on specialized antiretroviral treatment; 995 health workers on blood safety and universal precautions; and 2,333 political, community, religious leaders and police and armed services on basic HIV knowledge and stigma reduction. It also produced 278 television and radio shows on HIV prevention.

40. Also through the Global Fund, UNICEF supported efforts to improve adolescents' knowledge of HIV prevention, including training 515 trainers and peer educators through awareness-raising workshops; sensitization of 162 community, religious and youth leaders on HIV/AIDS and stigma reduction; and the production of two booklets, on HIV prevention and sexual reproductive health, for schools, adolescent-friendly spaces and UNRWA clinics. UNICEF supported a national knowledge attitude practice survey, which will provide a national baseline to guide planning for HIV prevention interventions in 2011 and beyond. Through the Global Fund, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supported the development of a national strategy to address HIV prevention, treatment and care among drug users and prison inmates. The Office also helped to establish two drop-in centres for injecting drug users in Gaza and the West Bank.

41. In addition to technical assistance and direct humanitarian programming, the United Nations supported the development of health infrastructure. UNDP and WHO jointly conducted an assessment of public health infrastructure needs in the Gaza Strip, aimed at identifying hospitals, clinics and primary health-care centres most in need of rehabilitation. In the West Bank, UNDP completed the expansion of a hospital in Tulkarem, adding a floor with 41 beds, and is completing the expansion of another hospital in Jenin, where two additional floors and 95 beds will be added. Rehabilitation efforts for three community mental health centres were under way, with two (Nablus and Ramallah) due to be completed in 2011. UNDP purchased three new ambulances for the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Civil Defence Department.

Employment

42. UNDP and ILO supported the establishment of a Technical Advisory Unit at the Ministry of Labour leveraging ILO technical expertise in the development, implementation and monitoring of labour market policies.

43. UNDP continued a programme providing emergency job creation schemes in solid waste management, agriculture and fishery, benefiting 50,000 people. UNDP strengthened activities under the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme and other microfinance projects, providing income for more than 6,000 households. The construction of youth and women's centres, schools for the blind, road and other basic infrastructure, additional classrooms and water networks also continued to generate employment for Palestinians through a poverty-oriented small-scale infrastructure employment generation programme. A total of 21 projects

were completed in 2010, seven were ongoing and 67 were selected and approved for additional funding in 2011.

Targeted social protection

44. The World Bank-funded Social Safety Net Reform Project was merged with European Union-funded programmes during the reporting period. The cash transfer programme provided assistance to more than 63,000 poor households on a quarterly basis. The reform effort supported by the project and led by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs resulted in the establishment of an effective poverty-targeting database as well as the systematic use of the banking system to provide and to monitor cash transfers. UNRWA distributed 538,185 food parcels and around $5.4 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 32,820 households through its programme for special hardship cases. UNRWA provided a family income supplement to bridge the abject poverty gap for 10,441 individuals in the West Bank and 68,321 individuals in Gaza. A total of $8,998,854 was distributed through the programme.

Culture

45. UNESCO continued its technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority with a view to its future adherence to and implementation of key international instruments. UNESCO continued to lead a multi-agency programme on culture through the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. With support from donors, longer-term protection, preservation and enhancement measures were undertaken at eight cultural heritage sites, including one in Gaza. Such interventions aimed at developing models for the management of cultural heritage with international standards and enhancing opportunities for domestic and international cultural tourism. UNESCO also worked with the Palestinian Authority on a national inventory of intangible cultural heritage.

Food security and agriculture

46. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) assisted more than 10,000 households in the West Bank and Gaza during the reporting period in order to maximize and safeguard the use of their assets and resources and to expand their livelihood opportunities. Support was provided in backyard food production, herding, fisheries, cottage industries, home gardening, food-processing and land rehabilitation. FAO also supported the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in agriculture and dedicated significant resources to empowering youth.

47. The UNDP Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme project supported the establishment of 2,500 sustainable rural and agricultural enterprises in the fishery, livestock, greenhouse and food processing sectors in Gaza through grants and microfinancing schemes. Each enterprise was composed of one to four employees and generated sufficient income to support one to three households. The Islamic Development Bank and the Governments of Japan and Italy supported the initiatives, creating 12,000 jobs as of the drafting of the present report. Women led approximately 37 per cent of the enterprises. Through its emergency support project, UNDP replanted 3,000 dunums of vegetables, rehabilitated 118 fishing boats and fishery gearing boxes, provided input materials for 128 poultry farms and rehabilitated 39 groundwater wells and 600 greenhouses.

Human rights, women, children and youth

48. The United Nations continued to mainstream human rights into all of its work and provide technical assistance in order to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority on human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations agencies started a programme of work with the Palestinian Authority to comprehensively update and revise the Palestinian national plan of action for human rights, which had been jointly prepared in 2000 but subsequently suspended due to the political situation.

49. Together with other United Nations agencies and civil society, OHCHR participated in the revision of the Palestinian Penal Code, with the aim of ensuring that any new legislation would be in accordance with international standards. In continuation of its programme to train the Palestinian judiciary on international human rights standards, OHCHR held a three-day seminar in the West Bank for 12 Palestinian judges. In 2011, the Palestinian Authority announced that civilians would no longer be tried in military courts, a decision welcomed by United Nations agencies and civil society, which had advocated for its adoption.

50. The special needs of women, children and youth remained a focus for the United Nations. Acting under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs, UN-Women continued to support the Mehwar Centre, which hosted and protected a monthly average of 25 women and their children from violence and honour killings.

51. UNFPA supported training of 350 women from municipalities, health centres, rehabilitation centres, non-governmental organizations and local communities on psychosocial support and mental health, gender-based violence and human rights. UNFPA continued to support four community-based networks, through which more than 35,000 vulnerable women benefited from 2,100 outreach awareness sessions, and involved men in capacity-building courses and counselling. Family protection units established within the police force in the West Bank were strengthened through training of 250 police officers and 50 prosecutors from the office of the Prosecutor General. More than 200 imams and women preachers also participated in child rights and protection awareness training, enabling them to advocate for child rights issues during Friday sermons and religious sessions in mosques.

52. UNICEF provided direct psychosocial support through non-governmental partners reaching around 20,000 children and 10,000 caregivers. Psychosocial teams, numbering 11 in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza, conducted group counselling sessions, individual counselling, emergency interventions, non-formal education and peer-to-peer counselling. In East Jerusalem and Area C, emergency teams provided support to communities on both sides of the barrier. UNICEF continued to support 20 family centres in Gaza, benefiting more than 80,000 children through a range of protection services.

53. UNICEF continued to lead an inter-agency working group for the monitoring and response mechanism on grave violations against children in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). In partnership with a coalition of Israeli, Palestinian and international organizations, UNICEF supported the development of a monitoring and reporting database to analyse trends and inform advocacy, response and

prevention strategies. The database included violations specific to the socio-political context in the Territory.

54. UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA supported the Palestinian Ministry of Youth and Sports in developing the Cross-Sector National Strategy for Youth (2011-2013). The strategy will be the basis of a national action plan for youth in 2011. UNICEF supported the development of a planning and monitoring system at the Ministry that includes a database of existing youth centres and youth services. UNICEF continued to support 100 community-based organizations offering quality adolescent-friendly activities to about 65,000 boys and girls through after-school activities including sports, drama and life-skills education. In June 2010, UNFPA launched a project to increase Palestinian youth participation in early recovery, improve their prospects for employment and reduce their social and economic marginalization. By the end of 2010, the project had reached 518 youths (49 per cent females). A second phase was planned for 2011-2012.

55. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supported the general administration of reform and rehabilitation centres to strengthen the management, operation and oversight of civil prisons administered by the Palestinian Authority. The Office and the centres developed general and specialized prison staff training, strengthened information management systems, developed pilot vocational training programmes for inmates, and improved prison health. Assistance focused on compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The technical assistance provided in those areas was designed as an initial step towards achieving sustainable reform and development of the civil prison service in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and with a view to establishing a firm foundation for longer-term reform within the Palestinian criminal justice sector as a whole.

56. In May 2010, ILO supported the establishment of a legal clinic to assist Palestinian workers in Israel with regard to their rights and compensation.

57. Within the framework of the joint United Nations programme on gender equality and women's empowerment, supported by the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, ILO assisted in the establishment of a national women's employment committee that focuses primarily on creating a positive environment by reforming discriminatory laws and planning for gender-sensitive employment in order to increase the influence of gender advocates and workers' and employers' organizations in decision-making and planning processes. The committee also assists the Palestinian Ministry of Labour and social partners in implementing specific measures to promote women's employment and their protection in the workplace.

Environment

58. The World Bank continued to contribute to the development of a sustainable institutional structure for the water and wastewater sector in Gaza, including through strengthening the regulatory and institutional capacity of the Palestinian Water Authority. The World Bank completed the rehabilitation of a sewage pumping station in the Beit Lahia area of northern Gaza and the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant was under way. When completed in 2013, the facility will benefit more than 300,000 people and irrigate up to 1,500 hectares of land adjacent to the plant.

59. UNDP continued to support the capacity-building of relevant ministries and civil society organizations to adapt to climate change challenges in the short and long term and to integrate climate change coping mechanisms in the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013.

60. The ongoing Southern West Bank Solid Waste Management Project of the World Bank, which will benefit approximately 600,000 people in the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates, was due to enter the construction phase in June 2011. New landfill plans for the project, which is located in Area C, were approved during the reporting period and a construction permit was expected.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

61. The 2011 Consolidated Appeals Process for the Occupied Palestinian Territory sought $575 million for 213 projects, including 147 from local and international non-governmental organizations and 66 from United Nations agencies. It focuses on bringing humanitarian assistance and providing protection to the most vulnerable populations in Gaza, Area C and East Jerusalem.

Emergency food support

62. The World Food Programme (WFP) supported about 800,000 vulnerable and food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians, including about 486,000 in the West Bank and 313,000 in Gaza. UNRWA provided emergency food aid to about 650,000 refugees in Gaza and 186,173 individuals in the West Bank. The joint assistance programme between UNRWA and WFP for 36,000 refugee and non-refugee Bedouin herders in the West Bank resulted in food insecurity in the group dropping from 79 per cent to 55 per cent.

63. The WFP urban voucher project in the West Bank assisted 6,000 vulnerable households during the reporting period, providing a financial stimulus to the local economy. A similar project in Gaza targeted 15,000 beneficiaries and enabled products valuing $2,504,500 to be purchased since its launch in 2009. In 2010, the voucher programme in the West Bank injected $2,836,000 into the local economy.

Emergency income generation

64. UNRWA provided temporary work opportunities to 111,853 beneficiaries to alleviate the impact of high unemployment and poverty rates, creating more than 5.3 million days of employment. UNRWA also provided more than $1 million in cash assistance to 112,180 individuals. At the start of the school year, UNRWA provided NIS 100 to 212,371 students in both elementary and preparatory schools, for a total of more than $5.8 million. In addition, UNDP provided income-generation activities to more than 6,000 families thr .gh economic empowerment and microfinance projects.

Emergency health support

65. WHO led the process of defining emergency health sector standards and helped in standardizing mobile clinic services and compiling a mobile clinic database. It also developed a system for monitoring emergency aid services to the

Palestinian population of East Jerusalem and helped to address restrictions on access to East Jerusalem hospitals.

66. Under WHO leadership, the United Nations and partners developed a health and nutrition sector response plan that aims at improving access to essential health services to the Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza. The plan formed a basis for the health section of the common humanitarian action plan and provided a framework for development and selection of individual health and nutrition cluster partner projects for the Consolidated Appeal for 2011.

67. WHO helped to fill the gaps in pharmaceutical supplies and continued to help in handling the large volume of medical supplies donated to Gaza, which entailed renting additional warehouses and assisting in sorting, registering, storing and delivering medical supplies and in disposing of expired or unusable medicines. With funds from the Government of Italy, WHO provided urgently needed medical equipment, spare parts and technical assistance to maintain, repair and improve existing equipment.

Emergency water and sanitation support

68. The UNICEF-led cluster on water, sanitation and hygiene maintained coordination among cluster partners, highlighted gaps and vulnerabilities through a harmonized database, enhanced advocacy concerning crucial issues and strengthened cluster partner capacity through trainings and workshops.

69. Support from UNICEF for emergency water, sanitation and hygiene benefited about 200,000 people (including 175,000 children). UNICEF provided tankered water to 12,351 people in south Hebron and about 90,000 children in 90 schools in Gaza. UNICEF supported repairs of water networks and pumps in order to improve access to safe drinking water for 36,000 people. UNICEF rehabilitated sewage networks and pumps, providing adequate sanitation for about 4,200 people. A total of 34 cisterns were cleaned and disinfected and the awareness of local communities was raised on safe water handling and hygiene. In collaboration with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education, UNICEF supported the construction and rehabilitation of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in 59 schools, providing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for about 40,000 children and more than 700 teachers (around 50 per cent of whom were girls and women). Hygiene promotion activities benefited 16,750 students and 525 teachers.

Emergency agriculture support

70. FAO, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations, led and coordinated a response to a major pest outbreak on tomato fields that affected more than 2,000 households in the Gaza Strip. FAO provided land reclamation and livelihoods assistance packages to 656 farming households that lost their livelihoods during operation "Cast Lead".

71. FAO also monitored vulnerability of small-scale farmers and herders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to climatic, economic and political shocks. Developed in collaboration with the water, sanitation and hygiene cluster, the monitoring system and response framework was designed to result in a more coordinated humanitarian approach to emergency preparedness and response and advocate for the economic security of the vulnerable communities.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

72. The United Nations sought to integrate its support to the building of Palestinian institutions as a matter of priority. It therefore prepared a coordinated package of capacity development programming for which $30.7 million is being sought.

73. The United Nations enhanced the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to collect revenue and accelerate customs clearance procedures. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) continued to support the modernization of Palestinian customs through training on automated systems. UNCTAD also provided policy and advisory services in trade facilitation and policy, including a detailed study on Palestinian external trade. UNCTAD continued to support the Palestinian private sector through the provision of advisory services to the Palestinian Shippers' Council.

74. UN-Women assisted the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs in developing a cohesive cross-sectoral national gender strategy that forms an integral part of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013.

75. FAO supported the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a cohesive national strategy for the agricultural development sector, the "shared vision". UN-Women assisted the Palestinian Authority in undertaking a gender analysis of the shared vision to mainstream gender into the 2011-2013 Action Plan. FAO provided technical advice to the Ministry on food safety, which included recommendations for a central veterinary laboratory and the development of a national animal identification and animal product tracking system.

76. Acting under the umbrella of the Mehwar Centre project (see para. 50 above), UN-Women provided technical support to the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs towards the establishment of a national social protection system for female victims of violence, adopting international human rights standards. UNICEF support to the Ministry included finalization of a national strategy and action plan based on the amended "Child Law" and the piloting of a non-violence in school policy in 93 schools in the West Bank and 20 schools in Gaza.

77. UNFPA trained Palestinian Authority ministries on developing social indicators and on the use of data in national planning. UNICEF and UNFPA jointly supported the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in implementing the 2010 national family survey to collect data on child health, women's health, youth and the elderly. UNFPA supported the implementation of the first national migration survey.

78. UNDP worked with the Palestinian Ministry of Justice to develop its institutional capacity and facilitate the improved delivery of justice for the Palestinian people. Focusing on legislative drafting, administration of justice and legal aid, the programme aimed at strengthening the Ministry's technical and operational capacity. UNDP established a working group comprising Palestinian government officials, civil society representatives and criminal law experts from the Arab world to provide advice on the development of a penal code. UNDP also introduced new courthouse case management software.

79. ILO technically supported the development of a labour inspection and social dialogue strategy, including outlining the main principles for its implementation.

The initiative was complemented with a comprehensive capacity-building programme for employers' and workers' organizations.

80. The World Bank continued to provide support to improve fiscal planning and management at the national and municipal levels.

D. Private sector development

81. UNRWA financed 12,000 loans valued at $19.73 million for Palestinian microenterprises and households. While the West Bank portfolio grew by 20 per cent (9,500 loans valued at $16.06 million), credit outreach in Gaza shrunk to 2,400 loans valued at just $3.67 million owing to the closure. Despite the situation in Gaza, UNRWA was able to cover 126 per cent of its running costs of $3.69 million from its credit operations.

82. The United Nations was actively engaged in supporting cooperatives and microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises. ILO assisted the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy on a strategy paper for establishing a development agency for such enterprises. ILO also supported the national cooperative reform process, including the newly adopted unified cooperative law.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

83. Humanitarian and longer-term assistance continued through the humanitarian country team and the United Nations country team. Work through the mechanisms and their associated structures helped to ensure programming coherence and greater alignment with the Palestinian Authority, including with the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013. Relations with all actors and the donor community also improved, helping to ensure coordination with the broader aid community, joint advocacy positions and reduced duplications.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

84. In 2010, donors provided about $1.2 billion towards direct budget support of the Palestinian Authority. The budgetary external financing requirement for 2011 was estimated at $1 billion, down more than 16 per cent from 2010, reflecting the improved capacity of the Palestinian Authority to collect local revenue. A total of $200 million was received, and $500 million pledged for 2011. Donor support remains critical for addressing the Palestinian Authority budget shortfall of roughly $300 million.

Donor coordination

85. The local aid coordination structure continued to serve as a key forum for discussing and providing input to new sector strategies and the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013. The coordination of humanitarian advocacy and information, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also continued during the reporting period.

86. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held during the reporting period. The Joint Liaison Committee, a tripartite coordination mechanism comprising the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and representatives of the international community, also met twice in the period.

V. Unmet needs

87. The 2010 Consolidated Appeals Process called for $559 million for 236 humanitarian and early-recovery projects in the areas of food security, agriculture, protection, education, health, water and sanitation, and coordination and support services. As of 31 December, funding stood at 50 per cent. The 2011 Consolidated Appeals Process requests $576 million for critical humanitarian activities. As of 1 March, only 7 per cent of the requested funds had been pledged or received. The low response rate, against the backdrop of low funding in 2010, threatens the ability of United Nations agencies and their partners to provide critical assistance to Palestinian people. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a potential shortfall of $53 million for 2011.

88. United Nations agencies continued to assist vulnerable Palestinians in Area C, where access to education, water and health services remained extremely constrained. Additional measures to facilitate Palestinian use of land and resources and the provision of basic services in Area C were critical in the following year.

VI. Challenges

89. In the West Bank, despite the easing of some obstacles, movement and access continued to be restricted, as did the planning and permits process in Area C, while settlement expansion and demolitions of houses and livelihood assets have accelerated since September 2010.

90. Despite a number of positive developments in Gaza, the main features of the crisis remained unaddressed, including recurring violence by militants and Israeli military actions, continued closure, the lack of Palestinian unity within the framework of the Palestinian Authority and the commitments of the PLO. A further steady flow of approvals for United Nations work involving "dual-use" materials will be needed, particularly in the areas of housing, education, health, energy and water and sanitation. Donors that pledged funding at the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, were encouraged to seek avenues for expenditure.

91. The Palestinian Authority continued to reduce its dependence on external donor assistance and had halved its reliance on donor assistance since the International Donors' Conference for the Palestinian State, held in Paris in 2007. As a result, the Palestinian Authority deficit for recurrent spending, which is financed by donors, is expected to decline to less than $1 billion in the 2011 budget. Continued and predictable support to the Palestinian Authority budget to finance the deficit was essential in order to ensure stability and support reform efforts.

VII. Conclusions

92. The operational context for the United Nations in the reporting period improved. Despite economic growth registered across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was prompted by Palestinian and Israeli efforts, the overall socio-economic and political situation in the Territory remained challenging. Major challenges included high unemployment and food insecurity, the rise in violent attacks and casualties, and the continued closure and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.